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You Be The Critic

The Gazette today prints the first batch of letters in response to our invitation: You Be The Critic. We've chosen a cross section that reflects the general view of our own critics' observations. We hope you will find them lively and provocative.

We look forward to hearing from you regularly. What YOU have to say is important to us, particularly to our reviewers — **Maureen Peterson** and **Bruce Bailey** (music and theatre), **Dave Chenoweth** (film), **David Sherman** and **Juan Rodriguez** (rock and pop), **Tom Schnurmacher** (TV-radio), **Linde Howe-Beck** (dance) and **Virginia Nixon** (art).

Your written comments should be made on one side of the paper (preferably typed) and should include your name and address. All letters will be read, but due to pressure of space, not all can be printed. Please note that letters may be condensed at the editor's discretion. Send them to:

You Be The Critic, Entertainments Dept., The Gazette, P.O. Box 8000, Montreal H3C 3E2.

Steve Forbert critic must have a tin ear

The short put-down article entitled "Folksy Effort a Failure" by Juan Rodriguez regarding Steve Forbert's excellent music in *The Gazette* of May 19 certainly deserves to have a counter opinion expressed, in this case, mine.

It may be true that Steve Forbert has been highly hyped, but his album is not rising on the charts simply for this reason. People who really listen to good songs like what they hear and when they like what they hear, they go out and buy what they like.

Juan Rodriguez must have a tin ear, or a least one that isn't attuned the way mine is. I have only heard three cuts from the new album *Thinkin, Rainbow Dreams* and *Love's a Funny State of Mind* but they were lyrical and magical for me and echo sentiments that I feel apply to intelligent, sensitive individuals.

It also saddens me that Rodriguez neglected to mention the fine harmonica work in these songs. Being a harmonica player myself, I enjoy Forbert's melodies wholeheartedly, and sometimes even join in with him.

At this time, I would like to encourage all fans to attend the Joan Armatrading — Steve Forbert concert tomorrow and I hope they enjoy some good music.

And if Rodriguez is forced to attend one of Steve Forbert's performances so that he can write an "innocuous" review which seems to mirror no one's opinion but his own, may he have a good time, also. He just might be able to if he opens his ears and his heart.

I thank *The Gazette* for providing the opportunity to express my personal views in this fashion.

Deborah Ann De Roo
Montreal

Stewart is trying to please

I read the review Juan Rodriguez wrote May 10 on Rod Stewart's concert and was quite disappointed. Rod Stewart is great, and I'm not the only one who seems to think so. He played 90 minutes to a sell-out crowd.

One must take it into consideration that Rod has been on tour for quite some time, as a great critic should know.

As for his song *Do you think I'm Sexy*, some people enjoy disco and I feel that Rod is trying to please the public. Disco's in, although I myself am not a disco fan. Rock stars have to try different things.

And by no means is Rod fading. As for his hoarse voice, it's his style, and if Rodriguez can't appreciate it that's his problem, don't turn others off him. He's a rock star and he worked hard for what he's got.

After one, possibly, poor show Rodriguez says he's rock bottom. I'd love to see Rodriguez up on stage in front of so many people doing a concert. As for Stewart being a tired old woman, he's nowhere being old and he's still as sexy as ever. He's still got it. Sorry, Juan, wrong again.

A. Stewart
Montreal

Rod Stewart: Most readers think he's great.

Rod Stewart concert

That gravel voice is unique

In response to Juan Rodrigues' totally unjustified comments on the Rod Stewart show in *The Gazette* of May 10 I would just like to offer my own opinion.

I almost screamed

Recently in one of my classes, we were discussing our future jobs and ambitions and at the time, I wasn't quite sure of what I would like to be.

I have been reading your articles in *The Gazette* for quite a while and I think I would like to become, someday, a rock critic. I am 15 years old.

When Rod Stewart came to the Forum, I went to see him. His performance wasn't as good as I expected, but it was worthwhile going to see. That is my opinion. Rodrigues' review of the concert wasn't a good one, but I respect his point of view.

When I read that people have been making remarks and saying that his article was untruthful, just because they happened to have enjoyed the show, I almost screamed. I think that is totally ridiculous! Everyone is entitled to his opinion; besides, what's a rock critic if he can't even write a bad review once in a while?

I think that the Rolling Stones are the best group that I've ever heard. Especially Keith. Very close behind the Stones come the Kinks. I am interested in hearing about Rodrigues' favourite rock & roll groups. Well, I'd be happy to receive a reply from you sometime in the near future.

Marion Whyte
Huntingdon

I agree with Stewart review

I grew up musically in the Apollo Theatre and later the Esquire Show Bar.

I agree 100 per cent with Juan Rodrigues' review on Rod Stewart May 10th 1979.

Bob White
Montreal

Firstly, to say that Rod Stewart has strayed from his roots is completely wrong. He is keeping up with the times and there's nothing wrong with that: attracting new audiences and keeping the old.

He's recorded a couple of disco numbers and to rate them as successful would be quite an understatement. This only goes to prove that his talents don't only lie in one style of song.

Why is it that no one stomped on the Bee Gees when they went disco? Instead, they were glorified by thousands. Well, so be it with Rod Stewart.

During the entire show, Rod was able to captivate his audience like no one I've ever seen perform, reaching out to the people left, right and centre, from a magnificent stage which allowed no one's view to be obstructed. And romp around he did - never showing a sign of fatigue. Who else could wear a purple satin rack suit with green sneakers and still have class?

There's absolutely no need to compare Rod Stewart to Mick Jagger for they are two completely different performers each mastering their own styles.

Rod's hoarse, gravel voice is what he's all about. That's one of the things that differentiates him from all others, and makes his songs so unique.

R. Devico
St. Leonard

Altman article is a hatchet job

I feel I must respond to the hatchet job Dave Chenoweth did on Robert Altman in his article of April 14, entitled "Altman: A Successful Film Failure". To start: He cited the fact of only one Altman film (M*A*S*H) being a success at the box office.

That is true, but since when has a film's financial success been a criterion for excellence? As a film critic, Chenoweth must well be aware that good films don't always make money and bad films often do. Audiences don't always know what's best for them, there are critics, to separate the wheat from the chaff, so to speak.

As he pointed out, critical reaction to Altman's films has been mixed, what he doesn't mention is that most film critics consider Altman to be one of the best American film directors working today, a theory they still uphold even if they dislike his last few film efforts.

Chenoweth says that audiences are still waiting for Robert Altman to hit the "target" in his films. What does that mean? Does he want his films to be simple enough so that the audience will easily understand them and know how they should react to them?

Altman does not work that way. He implies rather then states and leaves it up to the audience to determine his message. He gets the audience involved in his films, rather then having them sit there passively, letting the film wash over them as is the case with television and other films.

Chenoweth cites Altman as a structurally weak filmmaker, because he says he has not set structure in his films. It would be more correct to say Altman has no conventional structure. His film don't have a beginning, middle and end like other films but rather pick up the characters at one point in their lives ad drop them at another.

Sometimes their lives are changed, other times they remain the same, yet, we often learn something about them that we can relate to. On the subject of Altman's coterie of actors, Chenoweth bemoans the fact that they have the nerve to try to render their own interpretations of the characters they play. I've always been under the impression that that was what the craft of acting was all about.

Would he agree with the statement that Alfred Hitchcock made: "All actors should be treated like cattle"? With views like that, one can hardly expect any actor to go out of his way to make a movie.

Chenoweth concedes that Altman has made films that have probed deep into the human psyche, but he says that Altman has no technical skills. How then do his films work? They work because Altman's intimate direction draws us into his films.

In his best films (*A Wedding, Nashville*), the camera flits from character to character, letting us see how they act and react, illuminating them and their deepest feelings. They symbolize us and the way we live. Chenoweth implies that Altman's qualities (in his films) are accidental. If so, he seems to be accident-prone, what with so many critically acclaimed films to his credit.

Shlomo Schwartzberg
Cote St. Luc

Chenoweth is churlish

I've been waiting for an opportunity to write since you first introduced You Be The Critic. I had no idea my chance would come so soon, but, Dave Chenoweth's May 5 review of *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs* provides a perfect opportunity.

Where did Chenoweth learn to write anyway? Ghost writing for *the Joy of Cooking*? He insists on writing in ridiculous parables that gives one the impression that *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs* is more about food and cooking than anything else.

Secondly, why must Chenoweth always take films of merit (and *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs* is a film of merit) and examine what they "mean" — even if he is to conclude that in this case one cannot really ask this question, let alone answer it?

As a film student, I was constantly annoyed by other students who would ask after the first reel, and then every subsequent reel, "but what does it mean?"

Get Out Your Handkerchiefs is not the exception where this question can't be asked. It is of the norm and most films should never have to be subjected to this question. I'm inclined to say that those films which one is forced to ask "what does it all mean?" are not worth seeing; however, I have yet to see a film where I feel inclined to ask it).

Incidentally, the director's name is Bertrand Blier, not Plier, as Chenoweth would have us believe.

Mark Berry
Pierrefonds

Bitchy reporter, that's Peterson

Maureen Peterson is a typical bitchy reporter. Her April 28 article on Calvin Sieb was horrendous. People who personally know Calvin certainly did not recognize the person she tried to interview as Calvin.

The Calvin we all know and respect would never invite people to Toulouse without meaning it. This article portrayed him as an arrogant snob, which is far from the truth.

Elizabeth Regan
Montreal

Opera lovers resent this fare from CLW

Hear! Hear! More power to your reader, B. Corbeil, who wrote about those second-rate performances of the Centre Lyrique de Wallonie.

We resent this type of hoax being perpetrated on an unsuspecting public who bought tickets in good faith. Montreal opera fans here heard some of the finest opera companies in the world and appreciate the very best of production.

Opera lovers should rise up in righteous indignation and demand that Opera du Québec be re-instated.

Patricia Roberts
Beaconsfield

Andy and Joe getting ready for West Island 'Crunch'

GEORGE KENNEDY
In Montreal film

George Kennedy and **Richard Crenna** have been signed to appear in the Montreal movie *Adrift and Beyond* which begins filming June 4. But the name of the film has been changed to *Deathship*.

Negotiations are currently underway with **Susannah York** and **Sarah Miles** for the role of the female lead.

The football comedy *Crunch* begins filming at various locations in the West Island June 12. The unconfirmed leads are **Andy Griffith** and **Joe Namath**.

Watch for a major casting announcement on that film in one of next week's columns.

Rock star turned film actor **Robert Charlebois** will be returning to Montreal from Europe to appear in a mammoth rock show to take place near the harbor in Old Montreal. Rumor has it that Canada's top rocker **Michel Pagliaro** will be on the same bill. The show will be in celebration of Canada's 112th birthday on the July 1 weekend.

Ginette Reno was supposed to have opened for **Johnny Carson** for his stint in Las Vegas. Whatever happened to that clever idea?

SUSANNAH YORK
She's negotiating

In their honor

Watch for at least six of Les Canadiens to show up at a party in their honor to be held Tuesday night at the Ox disco on Guy St.

Speaking of Ox, disco wizard **Johnny Battista** will challenge CJFM's C. J. Jackson to a bicycle race tomorrow morning at the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Bike-a-thon at Hampstead Park.

Ox is sponsoring Johnny at the a rate of $5 per kilometre to win the race. But Johnny is hedging his bets. He is going to sponsor Don Jackson at the rate of $5 per kilometre.

Turn up tomorrow morning. Proceeds go to a very worthwhile cause and you will be able to meet many Montreal radio personalities, including **George Balcan** and his stunning wife **Mackie**.

Nana Mouskouri will be launching a surprise something (hint: it's 33 rpm) at a chic downtown disco after her May 9 opening night performance at Place des Arts. Top ticket price for her show is $13 and good seats are still available for most performances.

L'Image, the make-up salon at Le Cartier, will be going macho on Mondays, offering manage and facials for men. This bright idea was the brainchild of L'Image's lovely and talented **Kathy Kaczender**.

Chatelaine is making its list. Checking it twice. Gonna find out who's naughty and nice. *Chatelaine* is coming in town.

Chatelaine magazine is continuing its quest for 100 representative Montrealers who will gather this Wednesday morning for a mammoth photo session at Place Jacques Cartier in Old Montreal.

The bring-a-Canadian-or-Quebec flag idea was scrapped as being too political. Besides, most representative Montrealers prefer not to show their political stripes.

The celebrated Uruguayan folksinger **Alfredo Zitarrosa** will perform in concert Friday, June 1 at 9 p.m. at Le Plateau Auditorium at 3700 Calixa Lavallee St, near Laloutaine Park.

The concert is being presented by the South American Association of Montreal. Tickets can be reserved by calling *845-1564* during the day or *844-7889* in the evening.

Regine has stolen her own manager **Gilbert Lanza** (no relation to Mario) from her Montreal club at the Hyatt to work at her New York boite. She sweetened the change of employment with an offer of $50,000.

Rumor has it that Gilbert is still thinking about the idea.

Gilbert — stop thinking.

If you are an **Elvis Presley** fan, don't miss the tribute to the King to take place Saturday, June 30 at 8 p.m. at Westhill High School Auditorium. Admission is $6.50 per person and all proceeds go to the Montreal Association for Multiple Sclerosis.

Madame Gertrude Gendreau, the great lady who founded and headed the Pro Musica society, died earlier this year. The organization is seeking a new administrator.

The final decision

The bilingual candidate should possess a knowledge of music and repertoire, have national and international artistic contacts as well as administrative and publicity experience. Mail your application to the Pro Musica office at 1270 Sherbrooke St. W. before June 15. The board of administration will make the final decision on the successful candidate.

The members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers retirees' club, *Les Vaillants*, will present an outrageous parody of Bizet's opera *Carmen*.

The production, which is open to the public, will be presented May 31 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the auditorium of the Amalgamated Building, 20 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W.

Les Vaillants are not young amateurs. The average age is 73.

Reached at her summer palace in Trout Lake, **Madame Zubie** was asked her opinion about the Conservative cabinet.

She replied that she would much prefer a chrome dinette set. Zubie was returning from a jet-set weekend at the Plattsburgh Air Force Base, where she had been kicking up disco pumps dancing with her close companion **His Excellency Count de Change**.

MICHEL PAGLIARO
On the same bill

NANA MOUSKOURI
Launching a surprise

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